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Comparative-Religion Notes.

THE long-expected work of Dr. L. H. Mills, the Oxford Zend scholar, on the Gathas of Zoroaster, is issuing from the press of Brockhaus of Leipzig. He has already published a translation of them into English in the "Sacred Books of the East," and this new work, with its text, versions and commentary, will be a justification of the former as well as a contribution to the scientific knowledge of these extremely difficult writings, the oldest portion of the Avesta.

IN the *Atlantic Monthly* of June, 1893, Lanciani gives some results of recent investigations into the age and character of the Pantheon at Rome, which has been the sphynx of Roman buildings from the archæologist's standpoint. He announces that the building as it stands at present is the work not of Agrippa whose name it bears, but of Hadrian, to whom we owe so many of Rome's most beautiful religious structures.

TO ALL interested in the practical effects of religious systems, any good work on the condition of the Buddhist country north of India is acceptable. *Where Three Empires Meet*, by E. F. Knight, is such a book, not only by reason of its general description of Ladak, but on account of its description of the sacred dances and ceremonies, very seldom given, of the annual festival at a monastery. It is a contribution to the comparative study of religious rites that is valuable, both because of its rarity and its intrinsic interest.

I. F. W.

A striking testimony to the value of the study of Comparative Religion from a source which ordinarily has not been regarded as prejudiced in favor of the new science is given in a work recently published in England, entitled *Religion and Myth*. Its author is the Rev. James MacDonald, long a resident and missionary in Africa. He concludes his book with the following statement: "*The church that first adopts for her intending missionaries the study of Comparative Religion as a substitute for subjects now taught will lead the van in the path of true progress.*"

A COLLECTION of ancient Sanskrit manuscripts has been discovered near Yurkand. The collection is known as the Weber Manuscripts, from the discoverer, a Moravian missionary. The collection consists of an astronomical treatise, a hymn in honor of Pravati, the wife of Siva, and a Sanskrit vocabulary. The longest document, which is much mutilated, is in an unknown language. The thing in this collection which will probably be of most interest to

the student of religion is the hymn. Whether, however, it will add anything of value to the already large hymn literature of the Sanskrit is a question which cannot be answered till the manuscripts are published. I. F. W.

MUCH interest has been aroused by the discovery and investigation of ruined buildings on the east coast of Africa, in Mashonaland, which are of a type neither Mohammedan, Christian nor African. Mr. Bent has made a careful study of them and published his results in a book entitled *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*. He holds them to have been constructed by merchants of Semitic race, probably from heathen Arabia, and dating from pre-Mohammedan, perhaps pre-Christian, times. The predominance of phallic emblems among the objects found is remarkable. The Himyarites, who traded in more northerly regions, especially at Axoum, are thought to be responsible for some of these structures. The conclusions of Mr. Bent, if established by more careful and detailed investigation, will be of much importance in the question of the Semitic influence upon the African races and religions.

DURING the past year, 1892-'93, the courses given in Comparative Religion at the University of Chicago have been largely devoted to the subject of the Semitic Religions. A course of lectures was given upon the Religion of Egypt and that of Babylonia and Assyria. A special study was given to the theories of Professor W. Robertson Smith respecting the Religion of the Semites. Later in the year these general studies were supplemented by a "seminary" course upon the Religious Texts of Babylonia and Assyria, including the material from Tello and the Magical texts, the Hymns and the so-called Penitential Psalms, with partial consideration of the Religious Epics. For the following year, 1893-'94, the Aryan religions will receive special attention in the department. Courses are offered as follows: Autumn Quarter, the Religions of India, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism; Spring Quarter, the Religions of Greece, Rome and Northern Europe; Winter Quarter, the Religions of China, and, in connection with them, the study of the Religions of Non-civilized Peoples; Summer Quarter, Islam. In addition to this work offered by the department of Comparative Religion, other courses on the Philosophy of Religion and upon special aspects and fields of the various religions will be given in other departments of the University.

THE question of human sacrifice in the religion of ancient Babylonia is reopened by Mr. C. J. Ball in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* for February, 1893. He describes a cylinder of black basalt which is by him dated between 2000-2500 B. C. In this cylinder representation "the God stands with one foot on the lowest, the other on the highest, step of a gradiform pyramid. This is doubtless a temple. In his right hand he holds a short recurved sword, and in his left a scepter. Flames rise from his arms. Behind him is an altar, with cereal offerings. In front are two figures,

wearing the priestly leopard skin. Their arms are raised, as if to strike. With the left hand one holds back the head, while the other holds up the beard of a man who kneels on one knee between the two. They are aiming a clear stroke at the throat. The victim wears only cap and loin-cloth. Flames are above; on the right a vulture is flying toward him, and on the left an antelope is leaping away from him." This conclusion of Mr. Ball must be accepted with great caution. No clear statement substantiating the practice of human sacrifice has been found in the Babylonian religious literature of the date to which this cylinder is assigned. At any rate, it will not do to build on this case a theory as to the frequency of such sacrifices in ancient Babylonia.

IN AN article upon "The Ceremonial Uses of Tobacco," Mr. J. Hawkins has collected in the *Popular Science Monthly* (June, 1893) a large number of examples of the employment of tobacco for religious purposes among the North American aborigines. His conclusions are that tobacco smoking was originally practiced by the medicine men or priests as a potent means of communication with the unseen spirits. Tobacco was the most powerful narcotic stimulant they possessed. In the dreams and stupor which it engendered came the desired divine communications. But, in course of time, conjectures our writer, the valued herb passed out of the hands of the priest and soothsayer into common possession of the people, a result facilitated, perhaps, by its use by the priests in curing diseases. Now it was the Indian's most prized possession, and therefore came to be an acceptable sacrifice to the spirits. Tobacco offerings are among the most important of all Indian offerings. It is a sacred plant; its use is necessary in times of treaty making and compacts of a binding character. The development of the various stages in the employment of tobacco for religious purposes among these peoples is very interesting. It is not certain that Mr. Hawkins has traced these successfully. Some criticisms might be made upon his views. But it seems that one thing is quite certain, viz., that the original use of tobacco was religious, and that only gradually, if ever, did it lose its sacred character. Whether it was originally in the hands of the medicine man and passed from him to the tribesmen at large is open to question.

IN THIS connection it is interesting to observe that the June number of the journal just referred to contains at least five articles which deal with subjects related to Comparative Religion. This is in a journal of popular science. People's beliefs about relations to an unseen and higher world are thought worthy of presentation and discussion in a scientific periodical. The fact may be placed in juxtaposition with a favorite idea of some that religion is falling before science, a point of view which Mr. John Burroughs takes in the *North American Review*, and from it proceeds to read a lesson to religion (he says "theology") on the futility of its attempt to exist. It is, perhaps, a more excellent way to study with the former periodical the facts which religion pre-

sents in its lowest and highest forms, to ask their meaning and the underlying reality to which they testify, the strivings and aspirations of the soul which they embody, the ideal future to which they point. With this purpose, which is one element in the comparative study of religions, the oldest and the sternest creed, the most superstitious belief and the most grotesque custom, as well as the highly organized and refined forms of modern religious life, are full of meaning and instruction. One lesson to be drawn from them may be this—that religion is as indestructible as any other element in the universe and the heart of man. One service which the science of Comparative Religion may hope to do for man is to make this clear beyond all doubt, and also to reveal the unity of religion in its many forms and in its progress under Divine Providence, revealed in the history of humanity.

AN illustration of the absolute necessity of taking the standpoint of the religious and moral system to be interpreted is given by Mr. De Forest in his exposition of Confucian ethics as seen in Japan (*Andover Review*, May-June, 1893). It is well-known that the Ethical Code which is wrought into the fabric of Japanese society is the Confucian law of the "For Relations." These relations are stated in words difficult to translate into English because of the utter difference of ethical outlook. Mr. De Forest gives them in the following words: "Sovereign and Minister" (including, indeed, also "lord and retainer," "master and servant"), "Father and Son," "Husband and Wife," "Elder and Younger Brothers," and "Friends." The statement of these relations, their order and intension, speaks volumes as to the practical ethics of Confucianism. All through society the preëminent virtue is loyalty. Loyalty is synonymous with righteousness. Society, indeed, is arranged vertically, not horizontally. The upper grades are to be revered and obeyed by the lower, even unto death. The lower grades are looked upon with benevolence and love by the upper. Hence, in religion God is to be revered. To love him is not seemly. The family means not primarily husband and wife, but father and son. Filial piety is obedience, reverence, care for the dead parents. Wifely virtue is along the same lines, as also brotherly love. There is no word for the idea of "brother" or "sister" merely, but only for "elder" or "younger" brother or sister. Friendship was limited and interpreted by the same notion. Different grades of society could hardly entertain friendship, nor could the foreigner be included. Such was the moral code of millions in Japan. It is being slowly but surely undermined by Western ideas introduced by Christianity. One can but hope that the issue of the conflict between the old and the new will be a practice on a higher plane than either.

THE work of the American School of Athens last year was carried on principally at Argos, and was rewarded by discoveries which, according to Mr. Waldstein, writing in the *Century*, June 1893, may bear comparison to the work of the Germans at Olympia and to Schliemann's excavations among the ruins of Troy, Mycene and Tiryns. The temple of Hera at Argos was one

of the most famous of ancient Greek sacred places. The images of Hera found in the excavation of this temple constitute an epitome of the development of the worship of this goddess. Rude images of her were found in which the face looks more like that of a bird than of a human being. A second series, though still rude, shows indications of a head with some pretensions to humanity in form. A third group represents the form and face, if not with beauty, still with distinctness of meaning. Yet another head was found in the finest style of Greek art, life-sized and undoubtedly an original work of the time of Pheidias and Polykleitos, manifesting the touch of a great master. From this series of images it is seen that Hera was in earliest times worshipped in an image, or rather a symbol, which had no likeness to a human figure. It is said that a pole was her symbol at Argos, and perhaps this, too, has been unearthed by the American excavators. Mr. Waldstein thinks it "highly probable." At Samos Hera's image in the earliest times was a simple board, and we are told that this board was superseded by an image having human shape which Prokles brought from Argolis. Thus at Argos Hera was worshipped in a human form before 1000 B.C. From this time to the period of the beautiful head just discovered, Greek art was relieving itself from convention. Especially at Argos, under Polykleitos, was the ideal Hera conceived and wrought out. This artist produced the most famous statue of her in all antiquity. The Hera which the American explorers have discovered is a worthy representative of this high artistic power which bodied forth the sublimest conceptions of the ancient Greek religious thought.

No problem of ancient religious history has excited more interest in those who have investigated the subject than the religious movement in Egypt, known as the "Sun disc heresy." The author of that reformation was Amen-hotep IV., or "Chuenaten," as he styled himself. The puzzling and apparently contradictory facts relating to him, the darkness in which many phases of the movement still lie buried, and the new light thrown upon the political and social life of the times by the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, part of the royal diplomatic archives of this king and his predecessors, all unite to deepen the mystery and intensify the interest. One class of scholars explain the movement as the result of Semitic influences on the Royal house. This view is especially dear to Professor Sayce, and is urged by him without a shadow of doubt as to its being the sufficient explanation. Another class urge the facts which show non-Semitic influence, and find in the religious condition of Egypt itself satisfactory explanation of the reformation. Both classes seem agreed as to the character of Chuenaten, dwelling on his physical defects and calling him a fanatic, or a weak-minded, visionary enthusiast. This view of his character is puzzling when one attempts to reconcile it with the literary remains of the new religious movement which are simple and lofty in their conceptions of the Deity, neither extravagant nor commonplace. And now Mr. Petrie has found in the ruins at Tel-el-Amarna the *death mask*

of the reforming king. It shows a "face which is full of character. There is no trace of passion in it; but a philosophical calm with great obstinacy and impracticability. He was no vigorous fanatic, but rather a high-bred theorist and reformer; not a Cromwell, but a Mill." This may be a conclusion somewhat too highly touched with imagination to satisfy a scientific student, but certainly the new "find" counts distinctly in favor of the royal leader, whose character and motives as a religious reformer have been so harshly judged.

IN his recent book on the sect of the Yezidiz, M. Menant has gathered up the results of travelers' observations and the conclusions of scholars respecting these curious and mysterious "worshippers of the devil," whose home is in the mountain valleys north and west of Mesopotamia. One cannot say that he has added much, if anything, to the already existing stock of information, or illuminated the mysteries of their cult. But he has helped to overthrow misconceptions which have grown up respecting their beliefs and practices. They have been accused of all sorts of debased superstitions and the practice of degrading rites. But Layard, who visited them, could find no trace of the latter, though he seems to have had excellent opportunities for observation. It appears that they believe in the existence of a supreme being of essential benevolence. They offer him no sacrifices. They do not approach him with prayers, and avoid making him the subject of conversation. They regard the evil one with equal reverence. His name is never pronounced, and an allusion to him is received by them with irritation. But, if pressed, they declare that they do not offer him worship, but reverence him as a fallen angel, who is to be restored in due time. They have a sanctuary, where stated festivals are held, priests perform sacred dances, and hymns are sung. They have no sacred books, but have great veneration for the Old Testament, while they do not reject the New Testament or the Quran. They believe in transmigration of souls. They have a spiritual and temporal hierarchy, a religious head and a political head, with grades of officials corresponding. One cannot comprehend the intensity of their attachment to this extraordinary mixture of beliefs, associated with Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism, Islam and Christianity, yet they have suffered fearful persecutions from the Turkish authorities for their fidelity to it. Menant notices a curious fact. "They have shown themselves sufficiently enlightened to understand that every people has a right to worship God in its own way, and they have built out of their scanty resources a church for the Christians of Armenia. The 'worshippers of the Devil' have reared a Christian temple."

WHAT is the essence of Egyptian religion? Is it a system of lofty and pure ideas respecting the Deity which was preserved in priestly circles? Is its outward form only an accommodation to the necessities of the populace though a symbolism which, however crudely grasped by the mass, was to the initiated the veil of the sublimer conceptions? Such was the view of the earlier

school of Egyptologists, which included such famous scholars as Chabas and E. de Rougé. Their conclusions still dominate much that is written to-day on the subject. A similar position is held by Dr. Brugsch, whose magic word for solving all puzzles is "pantheism." M. Maspero, the eminent French scholar, tells us in a recent volume of collected essays and memoirs on Egyptian mythology and archæology, that he, too, began following in the path marked out by the scholars above referred to, believing in the unity of the Egyptian God, his spirituality, and the sublimity of the priestly doctrine. But direct contact with the monuments disabused his mind of this Egyptian faith. He was compelled to acknowledge that the Egyptians themselves do not seem to have professed or even suspected the majority of these fine conceptions which had been so generously assigned to them. He grants that one may well feel astonished, even scandalized, at the fate of that ancient Egyptian wisdom in his hands, but he declares that time and further investigation have only substantiated his conclusions. The beautiful theories of the sublime religious mysteries of the Egyptian religion, with their influence on Israel and Greece, have received their death-blow through a fuller knowledge and a more scientific investigation of the facts. The theory which M. Maspero has substituted for its predecessor may prove in its details to need amendment, but its essential contention will stand the test. Egyptian religion, or better, religions, were polytheistic and imbued with material elements. Struggle as they might to rise out of the sphere, they never succeeded in separating themselves from the antecedents and elements of their origin. Priestly meditation struck out isolated fragments of higher conceptions and there was a general movement of thought in Egypt as in all ancient nations toward a separation of religion from nature and toward a unity in the supreme religious object, but in Egypt this movement had even less influence on religious life than in the other nations.

THE conflict of Christianity with the Paganism which opposed its progress in the Roman Empire is ordinarily supposed to cease with Constantine. Really it only enters upon a second stage, and three centuries more pass before paganism gives over the struggle. Then, indeed, a third stage is ushered in when the conquered paganism, in many places and many forms, passes into and modifies the faith to which it has yielded. It is the paganizing of Christianity, succeeding to the Christianization of paganism. All this process is profoundly interesting, not merely to the ecclesiastical historian, but to the student of the history of religion in general. M. J. Reville, in the French *Review of Religious History*, calls attention to two recent works on this subject, concerned especially with the second of the stages above referred to. The first is *Le fin du paganisme*, by M. Gaston Boissier; the second, *Geschichte des Untergangs des griechisch-römischen Heidentums*, by Professor Victor Schultze. Boissier's book deals with his theme as it is developed and illustrated in the great, the typical, men of the time and disclosed in the litera-

ture. Schultze, on the other hand, examines the relations of the two religions as they reveal themselves in law, in local politics, in the popular life. He has examined province after province of the Empire and traced with careful hand the disappearance or abandonment of the places for worship, the costumes, the rites and the practices of paganism. Schultze's conclusions are interesting and are summed up under three heads: (1) The legislation against paganism was theoretically severe, but its application was variable. The government was lax in carrying out the laws; the church was naturally less tolerant. (2) The conflict was violent only in the smaller towns and the country-side. These were less under the influence of the Graeco-Roman civilization, and also the magistrates clung with more persistence to their religious dignities and functions inherited from paganism. As for the country-side, the episcopal system worked in favor of the cities and to the neglect of the evangelization of those outside. (3) The local paganisms where the religions of Greece and Rome and their civilization had not gained much influence were the most strenuous opponents of Christianity. It is striking that the most difficult of all to overcome were the *Semitic* cults. Christianity fiercely fought the immoralities connected with these Oriental religions, while their adherents clung to them with a fidelity which withstood the most fiery zeal of the assailants.